



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Moo-ve out of the way!

Maj. Frank Saffen, senior advisor for the 129 Military Transition Team (MTT), comes face to face with a cow during a joint cordon and search operation March 12 near Ath Tha'Alba, just north of the Iraqi capital. Saffen pulled the cow out of the way, so the area could be searched.

Iraqi army troops excel during joint operation

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

ATH THA' ALBA, Iraq - When troops from the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team and Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment pulled up to the site where they teamed with Iraqi Army soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized), the Iraqi troops had already dismounted their vehicles and were ready to take down suspected insur-

gents.

Within a matter of five minutes, the Iraqi troops without any assistance from the U.S. Soldiers had captured 11 suspects who were implicated in insurgent activities in the area.

This was the scene during a joint cordon and search operation March 12 near Ath Tha'Alba, just north of Baghdad, in which an Iraqi informant led the troops to the safe havens of suspected insurgents.

Once the Iraqi Army soldiers had detained the men, they then began searching homes in the area, backyards and other

places that were potential hiding spaces for weapons caches. The U.S. troops observed and only assisted in the searches if the Iraqis specifically needed their help.

Although the operation was joint, very little of the operation hinged on involvement by U.S. forces, according to Capt. John Lane, operations advisor for the 129 MTT and a native of Herndon, Va.

"In the past few months, the IA have stepped up a lot more becoming more inde-

Teachers' institute opens in Rasheed

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4-1 Inf. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - The Iraqi National Police and Multi-National Division-Baghdad Forces opened the Mutanabi Teachers' Institute in the Rasheed district of the Iraqi capital March 13.

The institute was opened at the Netaaken School, a school for girls age 12 through 19, in the southern district.

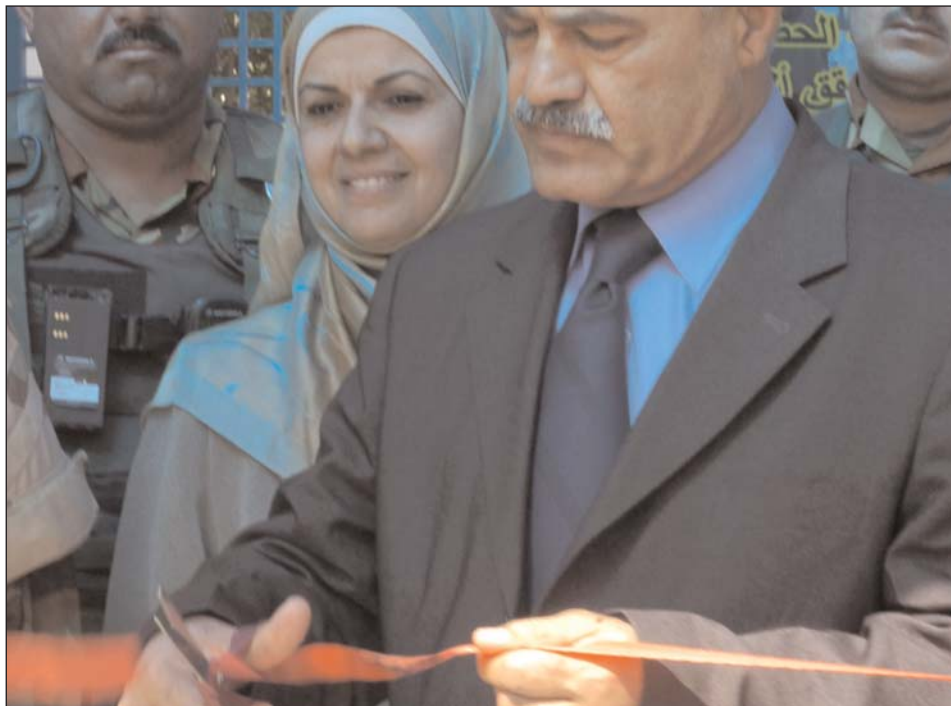
Sabeeh Al Ka'abi, the head of the Al Rasheed District Action Council, said this project, which took about three weeks to complete, would help teachers do their job of educating young Iraqis.

Staff Sgt. Bryan Stone, a squad leader with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, whose unit was instrumental in opening the school, said the mission went smoothly while providing a facility for the all-important business of education.

"Education's something no one can take away from you," he said. "It helps them provide for their own."

This project took place through the cooperation between MND-B forces and the Iraqi National Police, Ka'abi said, because of the two groups' common aim.

"The Iraqi government and the coal-



(Photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith 4-1 Inf. Public Affairs)

Sabeeh Al Ka'abi, the head of the Al Rasheed District Action Council, cuts the ribbon to open the Mutanabi Teachers' Institute in Southeast Rasheed March 13.

tion forces work hard because they have one goal," he said, "to build a new Iraq."

Stone said that the goal of building a new Iraq is one that the Iraqi people stand

behind.

"It looks like everybody out there is a little bit happier knowing they're getting a little more education and a little more security."

Arabic Phrase of the Day

malaabis

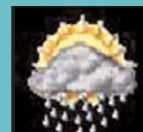
**Defined:
clothes**

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



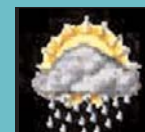
Today

High: 64
Low: 55



Tomorrow

High: 66
Low: 55



Saturday

High: 70
Low: 52

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IA capture 11 suspects north of Baghdad

Excel

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pendent against anti-Iraqi forces," said Lane. "A couple of months ago they wouldn't have gone anywhere without the help of U.S. forces and now they're doing 90 percent of the work."

"The IA's are gathering all the detainees and then telling us what kind of support they need," added Lane. "The U.S. guys are going to each house with them, standing by to help when help is asked for."

Lane also said that the majority of the help the U.S. provided to IAs during the operation involved giving IAs advice when asked for, bringing in military police dog handlers and their dogs to help find caches and calling in aviation assets for surveillance.

"To see where they've come from just 10 months ago, it's a big step in the right direction," Lane said.

"This is the Iraqi Army's show," said Sgt. Michael Greenlee, a scout for Troop A, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment as he patrolled the streets here observing as IA Soldiers searched back yards and looked through homes looking for weapons caches and insurgents. "Once a week we come out observing how they operate, and so far, so

good."

According to Capt. Robert Richardson, commander, Troop A, 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt., who hails from Pipe Creek, Texas, the reason for IA successes has been their desire to truly want to clean the streets of insurgents during recent operations.

"They want to take a more active role and they want to do this themselves," said Richardson. "I feel as we do more of these types of operations, we can take more of a backseat in the role of security for this area at least."

"The main thing is I hope (my Soldiers) see that the IA troops really are making progress, and that they're working toward the same goals that we are."

Lane echoed many of Richardson's sentiments, explaining that the goal they're working toward is helping Iraqis to take over responsibility for their country's own security which eventually leads to a free and independent Iraq and the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Much of what is being done in the villages and towns has been the results of Iraqi citizens in the towns and villages asking for increased security and help to end sectarian violence, and the Iraqi troops here are playing a major role in forming relationships with the people to do just that, said Bel Air,



An Iraqi Army soldier from the 1st Bn., 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mechanized) searches the courtyard of a home for weapons caches during a joint cordon and search operation March 12 near Ath Tha'Alba, Iraq.

Md. native Pfc. Daryl Lambert, a forward observer from Trp. A, 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt. who is now attached to the 129 MTT.

"Working with the IA Soldiers, like in this operation today, it's a good experience for us, because we're seeing the bigger picture," said Lambert. "They are doing great things and helping their own people here. They're getting to the point where they will be able to find improvised explosive devices and caches without our help and that's a big step."

"I've gotten to see things that other Soldiers don't get to see and I've changed my opinion, getting to know the IAs on a personal level as well as getting to know the Iraqi people in the areas where we work," added Lambert. "They're good people, just like us, who want many of the same things we take for granted."

Detainees captured during the day's operation were held by the Iraqi security forces for further questioning.



An Iraqi Army soldier from the 1st Bn., 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mechanized) asks villagers if they have any information that might lead to the capture of insurgents or lead to the finding of weapons caches March 12 near the town of Ath Tha'Alba, Iraq during a joint cordon and search operation.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

15th BSB finds 'Prosperity' at the IZ

By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2-1 Cav. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq - In some areas of ongoing-military operations, the results of the announced troop surge into the capital are already being felt by members of the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team.

The 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division packed up their equipment, personal belongings and vehicles for several trips over the last few weeks during its move from Forward Operating Base Falcon a few miles south of the International Zone to their new home at FOB Prosperity.

The Gamblers had been at FOB Falcon since the brigade arrived as a whole last November. On Falcon, they had been providing medical support, logistical management and transportation to the several thousand other Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines



Spc. Eric Christenson from, uses some of his carpentry skills to help out his fellow Soldiers from the 15th BSB, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. while the battalion moves into their "new" offices on FOB Prosperity.



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison 2-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Pfc. Joey Scott, moves in office furniture to their new headquarters building on FOB Prosperity. Scott, Tamatave and troops from the 15th BSB, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. moved to Prosperity to make room for the incoming troops at FOB Falcon.

who shared the base with them. Now, their area of operations is a little smaller than what they were used to, but sometimes that is a good thing. On Falcon, the Soldiers barracks were almost half a mile from the dining facility, Post Exchange and local shops.

"It's nice to be so close to everything," said Spc. Eric Christenson, a driver with Headquarters Company, 15th BSB.

For some members of the battalion, this trip is nothing new. Two of the companies from the battalion have been conducting combat logistics patrols from Falcon to Prosperity since they arrived in country.

Arriving was only half the battle. After taking over several buildings on the base, they began remodeling and organizing things to suit their needs.

Troops with little or no experience with a hammer or saw pitched in to begin building partitions and additions to the buildings that once housed other Black Jack Soldiers.

While the Gamblers continue to get settled into their new homes, other Soldiers adjust to squeeze more troops in and continue on with the Black Jack Brigade's mis-

sion.

"We already like being here," said Christenson. "We're just going to keep working like we did on Falcon."

The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan., had arrived in support of the troop surge into the capital.

The "Dragon" Brigade will be operating out of Falcon along with the existing units there.



Spc. Heather Rodriguez nails together a makeshift desk for her unit's "new" headquarters building on Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

Reunion in Iraq: Father, son spend time together

By Spc. Chris McCann
2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - When deployed, most Soldiers spend almost a full year away from their families, communicating by e-mail and telephone except for two weeks of leave. Chief Warrant Officer Johnnie Upshur, the engineer technician for the Army's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) prepared for the same when he deployed to Camp Striker, Iraq, August of 2006.

But in January, his son, Airman 1st Class Jonathan Upshur deployed to Iraq as well. He is stationed at Sather Air Base right next door, where he serves as a services apprentice, emplacing force protection measures.

Johnnie, a native of Birds Nest, Va., did not know his son would be so close. In fact, Jonathan himself did not know where in Iraq he would be stationed until just a week before he arrived.

Jonathan, a native of Nassawadox, Va., was attending college, aiming for a degree in computer programming, when he decided to do something else while he got his degree. He chose to enlist in the Air Force.

"I wanted to set myself apart," he said. "I didn't want to just be an average college graduate; I wanted to do something honorable."

Jonathan is still working towards his degree, coding in the computer language when he isn't on missions.

Johnnie, who is on his third deployment to Iraq, worries about his son like any father does.

"I don't like that he's here,



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann 2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs)

Chief Warrant Officer Johnnie Upshur (right) the engineer technician for the 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., shows his son, Airman 1st Class Jonathan Upshur, a services apprentice for the U.S. Air Force stationed on Sather Air Force Base, Iraq, a generator that he works with during a visit Mar. 10.

but in a way I'm glad he is, so I can see him. And I'm glad I'm here to support him," he said. "I'm pleased he's nearby - but if I had my way, he wouldn't be deployed."

Jonathan has found the closeness of his father a boon during the difficulty of deployment.

"It makes the transition a lot easier for me," he said. "Being able to visit, and having someone so close who understands the ins and outs of daily life in Iraq is very nice."

Johnnie has just passed the 20-year mark in the Army, and was deployed in 1991 for Operation Desert Storm. Jonathan enlisted just 10 months ago, knowing he would be deployed.

"I volunteered to come over here," he said. "But I had no idea my father was going to be right here."

"I'm extremely proud of

him, and of his commitment to his country," Johnnie said. "I'm glad I'm here for him. I didn't have anyone to teach or mentor me; my first deployment, I didn't have anyone to talk to, except in letters with a two or three-week turnaround. And even now, I find I need to talk to him too, especially when I come off a mission, just to clear my head."

Jonathan gets most Saturdays off work, and he makes the 10-minute drive to Camp Striker to visit his father.

"We try to play basketball or watch a movie, or just talk," Johnnie said. Jonathan is the oldest of his five children.

"We share a lot of interests," Jonathan said. "He's like a father and a brother - we both like keeping up on sports, shopping and investing. We're very close - and competitive."

Jonathan said he has always looked up to his father.

"Growing up, my father

deployed to Desert Storm; I looked up to him as my hero. I didn't understand what price is really paid for being in the military and serving my country. That gives me even more respect for him, that he's been doing this for 20 years."

"I'm no hero," Johnnie said. "I just want to be a good role model for (Jonathan) and my other kids and show them that they can do anything if they apply themselves."

Jonathan's siblings and mother worry, too.

"Everybody's nervous, with everything they see in the news," Johnnie said.

"They don't want us here, but they understand that we have a mission, and they support us one hundred percent," he said.

Johnnie and Jonathan are already planning to work together when they leave the military.

"Our long-term plan is to give back to the community," Johnnie said. "We want to give what we didn't have, growing up."

Both are interested in real estate in addition to investing - and the common interest is a critical part of their plan.

"We want to get into real estate," said Johnnie. "We'd like to give homes to people who can't afford their own, and give people a better life than what we had ... we'd like to build a recreation center for kids."

The father and son plan to spend as much time as they can together, they said.

Despite the unusual situation, it sounds like that plan is working.

"This is the most time we've been able to spend together in about five years," Johnnie said. "It's great."